

Appl. No.: 09/275,887
Amdt. dated 02/20/2006
Reply to Official Action of November 17, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives comprising the steps, performed by a processor, of:

receiving a request from a user ~~reflecting specifying a travel itinerary that includes a selected originating location and a selected destination location~~, wherein the request includes information identifying ~~a the selected originating location, a selected and~~ destination locations, and proximity tolerances specifying a user's acceptable distance range of at least one of an ~~alternative the selected~~ originating location or ~~alternative selected~~ destination location for searching for alternative itineraries;

analyzing the travel itinerary specified in the request, including the selected originating and destination locations, to determine a set of alternative itineraries ~~comparable to~~ different than the travel itinerary specified in the request ~~based on selected rules associated with travel~~, wherein the analyzing step includes identifying at least one alternative itinerary including an alternate originating location or destination location that is within the proximity tolerances and different than the selected originating location or destination included location of the travel itinerary specified in the request;

determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request;

determining a value for of the alternative itineraries; and

generating a report, based on the analysis and determination, including a value for each alternative itinerary reflecting a savings in travel costs in comparison with the travel itinerary reflected by the request.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the report includes the travel itinerary specified in the request, each of the alternative itineraries, the value for each travel itinerary, and the savings in travel costs is based on a difference between the value for the travel itinerary specified in the request and each of the alternative itineraries.

3. (Cancelled)

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4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the analyzing step includes locating any alternate lodging that is within the proximity tolerances.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the receiving step includes assigning geographical coordinates for each of the originating location and the destination.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the analyzing step includes generating a set of locations with coordinates located within a predetermined range of the destination based on information from a geographical coordinates database.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the step of generating a set of locations includes reducing the range when a number of locations in the set exceeds a predetermined number.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the step of generating a set of locations includes increasing the range when a number of locations in the set is smaller than a predetermined number.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) A method for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives comprising the steps, performed by a processor, of:

receiving a request from a user ~~reflecting specifying~~ a travel itinerary that includes a selected originating location and a selected destination location;

analyzing the travel itinerary specified in the request, including the selected originating and destination locations, to determine a set of alternative itineraries ~~comparable to~~ different than the travel itinerary specified in the request ~~based upon selected rules associated with travel;~~

determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request;

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determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries; and
generating a report reflecting the analysis and determinations,
wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination,
wherein the analyzing step includes identifying at least one alternative itinerary including an
alternate originating location or destination location that is different than the selected originating
location or destination ~~included~~ location of the travel itinerary specified in the request, and
wherein the analyzing step includes locating any predetermined travel packages that include
travel for the travel itinerary reflected in the request, and any predetermined travel packages that
includes travel for the at least one alternative itinerary, and wherein the travel packages are pre-
configured packages based upon prior negotiations with providers of travel services.

11. (Currently Amended) A method for providing information regarding savings
associated with travel alternatives comprising the steps, performed by a processor, of:
receiving a request from a user ~~reflecting~~ specifying a travel itinerary that includes a
selected originating location and a selected destination location;
analyzing the travel itinerary specified in the request, including the selected originating
and destination locations, to determine a set of alternative itineraries ~~comparable to~~ different than
the travel itinerary specified in the request ~~based on selected rules associated with travel;~~
determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request;
determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries;
generating a report reflecting the analysis and determinations;
sending at least one price-to-beat request to a plurality of service providers reflecting
information on the travel itinerary with a value associated with the determined value for the
travel itinerary specified in the request and the determined value for each of the alternative
itineraries;
receiving a response from each of the service providers with information on a service
provider travel itinerary and a value of the service provider travel itinerary, wherein the travel
itinerary from each of the service providers may be the same or comparable, according to each
respective service provider, to the user's travel itinerary or one of the alternative itineraries;

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reconfiguring the value of the travel itinerary specified in the request and the values for each of the alternative itineraries based on the responses from each of the service providers; and providing a report based on the analysis, determination and reconfiguration including an indication of the reconfigured values of the travel itinerary and the alternative itineraries.

12. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium containing instructions for causing a computer to perform a method for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a request from a user ~~reflecting~~ specifying a travel itinerary that includes a selected originating location and a selected destination location, wherein the request includes information identifying ~~at the selected originating location, a selected and~~ destination locations, and proximity tolerances specifying a user's acceptable distance range of at least one of ~~an alternative the selected~~ originating location or ~~alternative selected~~ destination location for searching for alternative itineraries;

analyzing the travel itinerary specified in the request, including the selected originating and destination locations, to determine a set of alternative itineraries ~~comparable to~~ different than the travel itinerary specified in the request ~~based on selected rules associated with travel~~, wherein the analyzing step includes identifying at least one alternative itinerary including an alternate originating location or destination location that is within the proximity tolerances and different than the selected originating location or destination ~~included location of the travel itinerary specified in the request~~;

determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request; determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries; and generating a report, based on the analysis and determination, including a value for each alternative itinerary reflecting a savings in travel costs in comparison with the travel itinerary reflected by the request.

13. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 12, wherein the report includes the travel itinerary specified in the request, each of the alternative itineraries, the

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value for each travel itinerary, and the savings in travel costs is based on a difference between the value for the travel itinerary reflected by the request and each of the alternative itineraries.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 12, wherein the analyzing step includes locating any alternate lodging that is within the proximity tolerances.

16. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 12, wherein the receiving step includes assigning geographical coordinates for each of the originating location and the destination.

17. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 16, wherein the analyzing step includes generating a set of locations with coordinates located within a predetermined range of the destination based on information from a geographical coordinates database.

18. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 17, wherein the step of generating a set of locations includes reducing the range when a number of locations in the set exceeds a predetermined number.

19. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 17, wherein the step of generating a set of locations includes increasing the range when a number of locations in the set is smaller than a predetermined number.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium containing instructions for causing a computer to perform a method for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives, the method comprising the steps of:

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receiving a request from the user ~~reflecting specifying~~ a travel itinerary that includes a selected originating location and a selected destination location, wherein the request includes information identifying ~~at the selected originating location, and destination locations~~, and proximity tolerances specifying a user's acceptable distance range of at least one of an ~~alternative the selected originating location or alternative selected destination location~~ for searching for alternative itineraries;

analyzing the travel itinerary specified in the request, including the selected originating and destination locations, to determine a set of alternative itineraries ~~comparable to different than~~ the travel itinerary specified in the request ~~based on selected rules associated with travel~~, wherein the analyzing step includes identifying at least one alternative itinerary including an alternate originating location or destination location that is within the proximity tolerances and different than the selected originating location or destination included location of the travel itinerary specified in the request; and

determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request; determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries; and generating a report reflecting the analysis and determinations.

22. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium containing instructions for causing a computer to perform a method for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a request from the user ~~reflecting specifying~~ a travel itinerary that includes a selected originating location and a selected destination location;

analyzing the travel itinerary specified in the request, including the selected originating and destination locations, to determine a set of alternative itineraries ~~comparable to different than~~ the travel itinerary specified in the request ~~based on selected rules associated with travel~~;

determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request;

determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries;

sending at least one price-to-beat request to a plurality of service providers reflecting information on the travel itinerary with a value associated with the determined value for the

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travel itinerary specified in the request and the determined value for each of the alternative itineraries;

receiving a response from each of the service providers with information on a service provider travel itinerary and a value of the service provider travel itinerary, wherein the travel itinerary from each of the service providers may be the same or comparable, according to each respective service provider, to the user's travel itinerary or one of the alternative itineraries;

reconfiguring the values of the travel itinerary specified in the request and the values for each of the alternative itineraries based on the responses from each of the service providers; and

providing a report including an indication of the reconfigured values of the travel itinerary and the alternative itineraries.

23. (Currently Amended) A computer system for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives comprising:

a buyer interface for producing a request from a user ~~reflecting specifying~~ a travel itinerary that includes a selected originating location and a selected destination location, wherein the request includes information identifying ~~a the selected originating location, and destination locations~~, and proximity tolerances specifying a user's acceptable distance range of at least one of ~~an alternative the selected~~ originating location or ~~alternative selected~~ destination location for searching for alternative itineraries; and

a server for analyzing the travel itinerary specified in the request, including the selected originating and destination locations, to determine a set of alternative itineraries ~~comparable to different than~~ the travel itinerary specified in the request ~~based on selected rules associated with travel~~, for determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request, for determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries, and for generating a report, based on the analysis and determination, including a value for each alternative itinerary reflecting a savings in travel costs in comparison with the travel itinerary reflected by the request,

wherein analyzing the travel itinerary includes identifying at least one alternative itinerary including an alternate originating location or destination location that is within the

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proximity tolerances and different than the selected originating location or destination ~~included~~
location of the travel itinerary specified in the request.

24. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 23, wherein the report includes the travel itinerary specified in the request, each of the alternative itineraries, the value for each travel itinerary, and the savings in travel costs is based on a difference between the value for the travel itinerary specified in the request and each of the alternative itineraries.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 23, wherein analyzing the travel itinerary includes locating any alternate lodging that is within the proximity tolerances.

27. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 23, wherein the buyer interface assigns geographical coordinates for each of the originating location and the destination.

28. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 27, wherein analyzing the travel itinerary includes generating a set of locations with coordinates located within a predetermined range of the destination based on information from a geographical coordinates database.

29. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 28, wherein generating a set of locations includes reducing the range when a number of locations in the set exceeds a predetermined number.

30. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 28, wherein generating a set of locations includes increasing the range when a number of locations in the set is smaller than a predetermined number.

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31. (Cancelled)

32. (Currently Amended) A computer system for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives comprising:

a buyer interface for producing a request from a user ~~reflecting~~ specifying a travel itinerary that includes a selected originating location and a selected destination location; and

a server for analyzing the travel itinerary specified in the request, including the selected originating and destination locations, to determine a set of alternative itineraries ~~comparable to~~ different than the travel itinerary specified in the request ~~based on selected rules associated with travel~~, for determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request, for determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries, and for generating a report reflecting the analysis and determinations,

~~wherein the request includes the name of an originating location and a destination, wherein the analyzing step includes identifying at least one alternative itinerary including an alternate originating location or destination~~ location that is different than the selected originating location or destination included location of the travel itinerary specified in the request, and wherein analyzing the travel itinerary includes locating any predetermined travel packages that include travel for the travel itinerary reflected in the request, and any predetermined travel packages that include travel for the at least one alternative itinerary, and wherein the travel packages are pre-configured packages based on prior negotiations with providers of travel resources.

33. (Currently Amended) A computer system for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives comprising:

a buyer interface for producing a request from a user ~~reflecting~~ specifying a travel itinerary that includes a selected originating location and a selected destination location;

a server for analyzing the travel itinerary specified in the request, including the selected originating and destination locations, to determine a set of alternative itineraries ~~comparable~~

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~~to different than~~ the travel itinerary specified in the request ~~based on selected rules associated with travel~~, for determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request and for determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries; and

a trader interface for receiving price-to-beat requests from the server and for providing a response from a trader with information on a trader travel itinerary and a value of the trader travel itinerary, wherein the travel itinerary from the trader interface may be the same or comparable, according to the trader, to the user's travel itinerary or one of the alternative itineraries

wherein the server is configured to reconfigure the value of the travel itinerary specified in the request and the values for each of the alternative itineraries based on the response from the trader and generate a report including an indication of the reconfigured values of the travel itinerary and the alternative itineraries.

34. (Currently Amended) A computer system for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives comprising:

a buyer interface for producing a request from a user ~~reflecting specifying~~ a travel itinerary that includes a selected originating location and a selected destination location;

a server for analyzing the travel itinerary specified in the request, including the selected originating and destination locations, to determine a set of alternative itineraries ~~comparable to different than~~ the travel itinerary specified in the request ~~based on selected rules associated with travel~~, for determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request and for determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries; and

a supplier interface for receiving price-to-beat requests from the server and for providing responses from a plurality of service providers with information on service provider travel itineraries and respective values of the service provider travel itineraries, wherein each of the travel itineraries from the supplier interface may be the same or comparable, according to each of the plurality of service providers, to the user's travel itinerary or one of the alternative itineraries

wherein the server is configured to reconfigure the value of the travel itinerary specified in the request and the values for each of the alternative itineraries based on the responses from

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the service providers and generate a report including an indication of the reconfigured values of the travel itinerary and the alternative itineraries.

35. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 23, including a supplier interface for receiving availability price requests from the server and for providing availability price responses from a plurality of service providers with information on service provider travel itineraries and respective values of the service provider travel itineraries, wherein each of the travel itineraries from the supplier interface may be the same or comparable, according to each of the plurality of service providers, to the user's travel itinerary or one of the alternative itineraries.

36. (Currently Amended) A computer system for providing information regarding savings associated with travel alternatives comprising:

an interface means for producing a request from a user ~~reflecting~~ specifying a travel itinerary that includes a selected originating location and a selected destination location, wherein the request includes information identifying ~~a the selected originating location, a selected and~~ destination locations, and proximity tolerances specifying a user's acceptable distance range of at least one of ~~an alternative the selected~~ originating location or ~~alternative selected~~ destination location for searching for alternative itineraries; and

a serving means for analyzing the travel itinerary specified in the request, including the selected originating and destination locations, to determine a set of alternative itineraries ~~comparable to different than~~ the travel itinerary specified in the request ~~based on selected rules associated with travel~~, for determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request, for determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries, and for generating a report, based on the analysis and determination, including a value for each alternative itinerary reflecting a savings in travel costs in comparison with the travel itinerary reflected by the request,

wherein analyzing the travel itinerary includes identifying at least one alternative itinerary including an alternate originating location or destination location that is within the proximity tolerances and different than the selected originating location or destination ~~included~~ location of the travel itinerary specified in the request.

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37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, wherein the report includes the travel itinerary specified in the request, each of the alternative itineraries, and a difference between the reconfigured value for the travel itinerary specified in the request and each of the alternative itineraries.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, wherein the report is produced geographically on a map, wherein the map includes the travel itinerary specified in the request, at least one of the alternative itineraries and the reconfigured value for each travel itinerary included in the map.

39. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 22, wherein the report includes the travel itinerary specified in the request, each of the alternative itineraries, and a difference between the reconfigured value for the travel itinerary specified in the request and each of the alternative itineraries.

40. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 22, wherein the report is produced geographically on a map, wherein the map includes the travel itinerary specified in the request, at least one of the alternative itineraries and the reconfigured value for each travel itinerary included in the map.

41. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 34, wherein the report includes the travel itinerary specified in the request, each of the alternative itineraries, and a difference between the reconfigured value for the travel itinerary specified in the request and each of the alternative itineraries.

42. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 34, wherein the report is produced geographically on a map, wherein the map includes the travel itinerary specified in the

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request, at least one of the alternative itineraries and the reconfigured value for each travel itinerary included in the map.

43. (Currently Amended) A method for providing information regarding savings associated travel alternatives comprising the steps, performed by a processor, of:

receiving a request from a user ~~reflecting specifying~~ a travel itinerary that includes a selected originating location and a selected destination location, wherein the request includes information identifying ~~at the selected originating location, a selected and destination locations,~~ and proximity tolerances specifying a user's acceptable distance range of at least one of ~~an alternative the selected originating location or alternative selected destination location~~ for searching for alternative itineraries;

analyzing the travel itinerary specified in the request, including the selected originating and destination locations, to determine a set of alternative itineraries ~~comparable to different than~~ the travel itinerary specified in the request ~~based on selected rules associated with travel~~, wherein the analyzing step ~~further~~ includes identifying at least one alternative itinerary including an alternate originating location or destination location that is within the proximity tolerances and different than the selected originating location or destination included location of the travel itinerary specified in the request;

determining a value for the travel itinerary specified in the request;

determining a value for each of the alternative itineraries; and

generating a report reflecting the analysis and determinations.

44. (Currently Amended) A method for providing travel alternatives, comprising: receiving, from a user, a request ~~including specifying~~ a travel itinerary including that includes a selected origination location, and a selected destination location, a first value associated with the itinerary, and proximity tolerances specifying a user's acceptable distance range of at least one of ~~an alternative the selected originating location or alternative selected destination location~~ for searching for ~~alternative alternate~~ itineraries;

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determining, without user intervention, a set of ~~alternative~~ alternate itineraries different than the travel itinerary specified in the request, at least one alternate itinerary being associated with an alternative value and a route between an alternate originating location or alternate destination location that is within the proximity tolerances, and either the origination or destination location ~~included of the travel itinerary specified in the request~~; and

providing a report including an indication of the first value, the alternate value for each alternate itinerary, and a savings value for each alternate itinerary reflecting a difference between the first value and the respective alternate value.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44, wherein the first value reflects a cost of travel between the origination and destination locations.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 45, wherein the first value further includes a cost of lodging.

47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44, wherein the set of alternate itineraries includes at least one alternate itinerary that is associated with a pre-configured travel package based on prior negotiations with at least one provider of travel resources.

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44, wherein each alternate value is equal to or less than the first value.

49. (Currently Amended) A method for providing travel alternatives, comprising: receiving, from a user, a request ~~including specifying~~ a travel itinerary including that includes a selected origination location, ~~and~~ a selected destination location, a first value associated with the itinerary, and proximity tolerances specifying a user's acceptable distance range of at least one of ~~an alternative~~ the selected originating location or ~~alternative-selected~~ destination location for searching for alternative itineraries;

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determining, without user intervention, a set of alternative itineraries different than the itinerary specified in the request, at least one alternative itinerary including a route between an alternate origination location or alternate destination location that is within the proximity tolerances, and either the selected origination or destination location ~~included of the travel itinerary specified in the request~~;

determining an alternate value for each ~~alternate~~ alternative itinerary; and
providing a report including a geographical map that contains:

a graphical representation of the origination location, destination location, and each alternate location,

a graphical representation of a first path between the origination and destination locations and a corresponding cost of travel for the first path, and

a graphical representation of an alternate path between each alternate location and either the origination or destination locations and a corresponding cost of travel for each respective alternate path.

50. (Previously Presented) A method for providing travel alternatives, comprising:
receiving, from a user, a request ~~including specifying a travel itinerary including that includes a travel route between a selected origination location and a selected destination location, and proximity tolerances specifying a user's acceptable distance range of at least one of an alternative the selected~~ originating location or alternative-selected destination location for searching for alternative itineraries;

determining, without user intervention, a set of alternative itineraries different than the itinerary specified in the request, at least one alternative itinerary including an alternate route between an alternate origination location or alternate destination location that is within the proximity tolerances, and either the origination or destination location ~~included of the travel itinerary specified in the request~~; and

providing a report to the user such that the user may visually inspect a map including a graphical representation of the route between the origination and destination locations and the alternate routes, and a travel cost for each corresponding route.

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51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, wherein the travel cost for each route is presented adjacent to the graphical representation of the respective route on the map.

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